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## Hong Kong

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### Hong Kong's Import Regulations on Wine

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FAIRS Subject Report

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#### Report Highlights:

This report provides general guidelines on import regulations of wine to Hong Kong and Macao. Wine importation into Hong Kong and Macao is not subject to duties and there are no certification requirements. Beverages over 10 percent of alcoholic strength are exempted from labeling requirements in Hong Kong but the alcoholic content has to be stated on the bottles. In Macao, beverages with alcoholic content over 5 percent are exempted from labeling requirements. This report also explains the Hong Kong government's arrangement with the Chinese government to facilitate Hong Kong's re-exports of wine to China.

**This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service in Hong Kong for U.S. exporters. While every possible care was taken in the preparation of this report, information provided may not be completely accurate either because policies have changed since its preparation, or because clear and consistent information about these policies was not available. It is highly recommended that U.S. exporters verify the full set of import requirements with their foreign customers, who are normally best equipped to research such matters with local authorities, before any goods are shipped. FINAL IMPORT APPROVAL OF ANY PRODUCT IS SUBJECT TO THE IMPORTING COUNTRY'S RULES AND REGULATIONS AS INTERPRETED BY BORDER OFFICIALS AT THE TIME OF PRODUCT ENTRY.**

### **Hong Kong - Wine Duty**

Hong Kong does not have any duty on wine. Effective February 27, 2008, Hong Kong's excise duty on liquor with less than 30 percent alcoholic content was reduced from 40 percent to 0 percent.

Liquor with more than 30 percent alcoholic content is subject to 100 percent excise duty. If the liquor is to be re-exported and is not to be consumed in Hong Kong, no excise duty is to be paid.

### **Hong Kong – License and Permit**

The importation of wine to Hong Kong does not require any license or permit. Effective June 6, 2008, under the amended Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, Cap. 109, Hong Kong wine/liquor traders are no longer required to apply for any licenses or permits for the import, export, manufacture, storage or movement of wine or liquor with an alcoholic strength of less than 30 percent by volume.

Liquors with an alcoholic strength of more than 30 percent by volume measured at a temperature of 20 degree Celsius are subject to license and permit control. Only licensed importers are eligible to import liquors and they are required to apply for a permit before each shipment arrives.

### **Hong Kong – Certificate of Origin**

The importation of wine to Hong Kong does not require any Certificate of Origin.

However, the importation of brandy and whisky to Hong Kong which are intended to be sold in Hong Kong are required to provide a Certificate of Origin, certifying the type, nature, quality and age of the liquor. If the brandy or whisky is to be re-exported and is not intended to be consumed in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong government (HKG) does not require any Certificate of Origin for its importation.

Brandy: the spirit obtained by the distillation of wine of grapes in the manufacture of which no additional sugar has been added, or a mixture of such spirits, that has been aged in an oak receptacle for at least one year or in an oak cask with a capacity of less than 1000 L for at least 6 months and contains an alcoholic strength of not less than 36 percent by volume at 20 degree Celsius; cognac: brandy made

in the Cognac region of France from grapes grown therein.

Whisky: the spirit obtained by distillation from a mash of cereal grains saccharified by the diastase of malt or other natural enzyme and fermented by the action of yeast, with or without the addition of flavoring or caramel, that has been aged in wood for at least 3 years and contains an alcoholic strength of not less than 40 percent by volume at 20 degree Celsius.

### **Hong Kong – Health Certificates**

Wine and spirits shipments to Hong Kong are not required to be accompanied by any health certificates. However, the Hong Kong food safety authority – Center for Food Safety – always encourages shipments, regardless of food/beverage types, to provide health certificates.

### **Hong Kong – Labeling Requirements under the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labeling) Regulations**

Fruit wines and drinks with alcoholic strength by volume of 10 percent or more are exempted from Hong Kong's labeling requirements specified under the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labeling) Regulations. For alcoholic drinks with an alcoholic strength by volume of more than 1.2 percent but less than 10 percent, the durability period will need to be labeled on the drinks. Stickers are acceptable. Apart from this, they will be exempted from all other labeling requirements.

### **Marking of Certain Liquors**

The name of the place of origin of port not produced in the Alto Douro district in Portugal, or sherry not produced in Jerez de la Frontera in Spain, shall be clearly marked on every container.

### **Labeling of Liquor under the Dutiable Commodities Regulations**

Alcoholic strength must be labeled on every container of liquor that is imported into or manufactured in Hong Kong for local consumption. If the liquor is imported into Hong Kong and not removed to a warehouse, the container has to bear the alcoholic strength when the liquor is removed from the ship, aircraft, train or vehicle on which it is imported.

The labeling of alcoholic strength is not required if the liquor is imported as a personal luggage and is for self consumption.

### **Voluntary Code of Practice on the Labeling of Alcoholic Drinks**

The HKG released a Code of Practice regarding the Labeling of Alcoholic Drinks. This labeling guideline is provided to the trade for them to follow on a voluntary basis. Details refer to GAIN Report #HK5021.

## **Customs Facilitation Agreement**

The Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department and the General Administration of Customs of China has a “Customs Facilitation Agreement” which provides measures to expedite customs clearance of wine imported into China through Hong Kong according to a “three designations” principle. The “three designations” refer to the following:

1. Designated Hong Kong exporters registered with the Hong Kong Trade and Industry Department;
2. Designated Chinese importers registered with the Mainland Customs, and
3. Designated ports in China.

(Currently, only Shenzhen implements this “Customs Facilitation Agreement” on a pilot basis.)

To become a “registered wine exporter”, a company has to be engaged in wine business in Hong Kong for the six months prior to the submission of the application. If the company has been established in Hong Kong for more than six months, the reference period for business engagement in wine may be relaxed to twelve months prior to the submission of the application.

The registration arrangements under the Customs Facilitation Agreement are voluntary. Non-registered companies are also eligible to export wine to China according to normal customs procedure.

Effective June 15, 2010, Hong Kong registered exporters may make use of the following customs facilitation measures at Shenzhen port for their wine entering China through Hong Kong:

- Pre-valuation of wine duty: request Shenzhen Customs to conduct wine duty valuation 10 working days before the shipment is imported into China. When the shipment arrives on China, Shenzhen Customs will normally complete the customs procedure within one working day; and
- Expedited customs clearance: if no pre-valuation has been conducted, Shenzhen Customs will normally complete the clearance within three working days for wine that has been imported into China before, provided that all necessary documents have been submitted. For wine new to the China market, the relevant process will normally take seven working days. If customs clearance cannot be completed within the said timeframe, the Mainland importers may request for release upon payment of guarantee deposit.

Trade sources indicated that the existing customs clearance would take about 2 weeks in the absence of the “Customs Facilitation” measures.

Detailed information including list of registered Hong Kong wine exporters is provided at:

[http://www.tid.gov.hk/print/english/import\\_export/nontextiles/wine/](http://www.tid.gov.hk/print/english/import_export/nontextiles/wine/)

## **Macao Import Regulations on Wine**

Effective August 25, 2008, Macao terminated its 15 percent CIF consumption tax on wine and beer.

There are no import tariffs or other duty for wine.

Effective June 2010, importers are not required to apply for any licenses or permits if they are importing alcoholic drinks with an alcoholic content less than 30 percent by volume.

No health certificates are required for the importation of alcoholic beverages to Macao. However, the Macao government always welcomes imports to be accompanied by health certificates.

Alcoholic drinks with alcoholic strength greater than 5% are exempted from labeling requirements.

For beverages exceeding 30 percent alcoholic content, Macao's consumption tax of 10% CIF value plus 20 Macao Pécas (about US\$2.58) per liter, remains in force. Also, only Macao companies registered with the Economic Services Bureau are eligible to be an importer. Importers are required to submit a copy of the shipment invoice when applying for an import license. A license will be provided within three working days and is valid within 30 days. Importers have to pay the duty before the shipments arrive Macao.

Samples of alcoholic beverages exceeding 30 percent alcoholic content shipped to Macao if less than 1 liter are not required to pay any consumption tax.

*Enquires for Liquor Importation:*

Economic Services Bureau  
Tel: 853-85972629  
Fax: 853-28715954  
Email: [dlic@economia.gov.mo](mailto:dlic@economia.gov.mo)

## **Wine Export Procedure**

U.S. exporters can obtain information on export procedures and how to apply for export documents such as a Certificate of Origin and Certificate of Free Sale from the website of Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau at: [http://www.ttb.gov/itd/exporting\\_alcohol.shtml](http://www.ttb.gov/itd/exporting_alcohol.shtml)

*Certification requests may be mailed to the address below:*

Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB)  
International Trade Division  
Attn: Export Certificate Program  
1310 G St. NW, Suite 400W  
Washington, DC 20220

You may also contact the International Trade Division by phone, at (202) 453-2260 or by e-mail at [exportcertificates@ttb.gov](mailto:exportcertificates@ttb.gov).

## **References**

ATO provides reports on Hong Kong's wine market at:

<http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Pages/Default.aspx>

The Hong Kong government has created a wine web page of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices in the United States to promote the booming wine business in Hong Kong. It is available at:

<http://www.hketousa.gov.hk/usa/wine/index.html>